

To: Press[Press@epa.gov]
Cc: Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]; StClair, Christie[StClair.Christie@epa.gov]
From: Harrison, Melissa
Sent: Fri 3/11/2016 2:58:42 PM
Subject: RE: Gold King Mine stories

-reporters

Nancy and Christie will handle.

Melissa J. Harrison

Press Secretary

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office: (202) 564-8421

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Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov

From: Ethan Barton [mailto:ethan@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2016 9:47 AM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>
Cc: Michael Bastasch <Mike@dailycallernewsfoundation.org>
Subject: Gold King Mine stories

Hello,

Michael Bastasch and I are working on several stories regarding Gold King Mine.

First, we would like to know if both breaching the mine and spilling mine waste was an accident. If it was, can you please point to any EPA statements where the agency called it an accident?

Second, has anyone been punished or disciplined for the incident?

Third, why didn't the EPA consult with Fish and Wildlife Service before opening the mine if it would impact any endangered species or critical habitats, given that the EPA Internal Review noted that a blowout was likely?

Fourth, why was the Department of the Interior selected to conduct the Technical Evaluation, given its heavy involvement with both the project and the spill?

Lastly, we would like to give the EPA the opportunity to comment on our findings:

- Internal emails asserting that the Aug. 5 work was intended to relieve pressure suggest breaching the adit was likely not an accident;

- The mine was never tested for pressure, even though the EPA knew it was at least somewhat pressurized. No explanation for this has been given so far; and

- The EPA crew believed they were digging at the top of the adit due to erroneous determinations from work in 2014. It's mostly unknown how those determinations were made. The crew, in fact, dug at the mine's entrance.

We would prefer responses before end of business today, but can amend our story until 6 pm Sunday.

Please don't hesitate to contact myself or Mike with any questions.

Thanks,

Ethan

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Ethan Barton

Investigative Reporter

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